

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) on Thursday evening voted to pass the State Department and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, which includes \$450 million to fund Peace Corps operations in fiscal year 2010. This is a \$110 million increase over last year's level and is the first step toward fulfilling President Obama's promise to double the size of the Peace Corps.

"I served in the Peace Corps and I've been an advocate for the Peace Corps for 45 years," Rep. Farr said. "I was excited when the president promised to double the Peace Corps, and now we've included funds to make that happen. Increasing Peace Corps is a no-brainer."

Rep. Farr has worked behind the scenes all year to increase funding to \$450 million. He introduced the Peace Corps Expansion Act (H.R. 1066) in February that included the \$450 million level and has served as a foundation for both Thursday's appropriations bill and the State Department Authorization bill that passed in June.

On Thursday, Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-Fla.) attempted to amend the bill to cut Peace Corps funding by \$77 million. The amendment failed after a vote of 172-259.

During floor debate on the Stearns amendment, Rep. Farr said: "This is the most effective foreign aid program, most effective domestic program. If we are going to curtail violence in the world, we have to do it through initiating what's best in America, by sending more Peace Corps volunteers.

Peace Corps currently accepts fewer than 4,000 volunteers each year, out of more than 13,000 applicants. This low number is due to lack of funds. In addition, 20 nations have requested Peace Corps volunteers, but the United States has been unable to send out additional individuals.

Thursday's bill that included the funding level passed by a vote of 318-106. The Senate has not yet taken up this bill.

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